

OPINION 1813

Alestes Müller & Troschel, 1844 (Osteichthyes, Characiformes): conserved

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Osteichthyes; Characiformes; freshwater fish; *Alestes*; Africa.

Ruling

(1) Under the plenary powers the name *Myletes* Cuvier, 1814 is hereby suppressed for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy.

(2) The name *Alestes* Müller & Troschel, 1844 (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Jordan (1919) *Salmo niloticus* Linnaeus, 1758 (a junior subjective synonym of *Cyprinus dentex* Linnaeus, 1758), is hereby placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology.

(3) The name *dentex* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the binomen *Cyprinus dentex* (senior subjective synonym of the specific name of *Salmo niloticus* Linnaeus, 1758, the type species of *Alestes* Müller & Troschel, 1844, by the first reviser action of Valenciennes, 1849), is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

(4) The name *Myletes* Cuvier, 1814, as suppressed in (1) above, is hereby placed on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.

(5) The name *hasselquistii* Cuvier, 1818, as published in the binomen *Myletes hasselquistii*, is hereby placed on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology (a junior objective synonym of *Cyprinus dentex* Linnaeus, 1758).

History of Case 2835

An application for the conservation of the generic name *Alestes* Müller & Troschel, 1844 was received from Drs Jacques Géry and Volker Mahnert (*clo Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Genève, Switzerland*) on 25 October 1991. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 51: 35–40 (March 1994). Notice of the case was sent to appropriate journals.

It was noted on the voting paper that the application sought to conserve the generic name *Alestes* Müller & Troschel, 1844, which had been used for 150 years for a group of African freshwater fishes, by the suppression of the unused senior subjective synonym *Myletes* Cuvier, 1814. Some of the species included in *Alestes* were of economic importance.

The name *Myletes* was proposed by Cuvier (1814) for the single African species *Salmo dentex* Hasselquist, for which he cited *S. niloticus* Forsskål, 1775 as a synonym. Cuvier did not give a date for Hasselquist's name. Hasselquist's (1757) work *Iter palestinum ...*, in which the name first appeared, was pre-Linnaean and the (1762) German translation has been rejected by the Commission. The names *Cyprinus dentex* and *Salmo niloticus* were made available by Linnaeus (1758, pp. 325 and 312) for supposedly different species from the Nile, but they have been recognised as synonyms since the time of Forsskål (1775). *C. dentex* Linnaeus, 1758 was based on *S. dentex* Hasselquist, 1757, and Valenciennes (1849) acted as first

reviser in giving it precedence over *S. niloticus* Linnaeus, 1758. The type species of *Myletes* was *C. dentex* Linnaeus by monotypy. In 1816 Cuvier described *Myletes* with the single species *C. dentex* Linnaeus, and cited *S. dentex* Hasselquist and *S. niloticus* Forsskål as synonyms. A specimen of *C. dentex* in the Stockholm Museum, probably that described by Hasselquist, has been identified as the type (Fernholm & Wheeler, 1983).

In his original (1814) description of *Myletes* Cuvier referred to American species but did not name them. In 1818 Cuvier included four new American nominal species in the genus. Subsequently *Myletes* was treated as a South American genus and Jordan (1917), followed with doubt by Eschmeyer & Bailey (1990), erroneously gave the South American *M. rhomboidalis* Cuvier, 1818 as the type species. Later Jordan (1920) corrected his error.

Müller & Troschel (1844) described the genus *Alestes* for two African species, the first being *A. niloticus*, with *Cyprinus dentex* Linnaeus, *Salmo dentex* Hasselquist, *Characinus niloticus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and *Myletes hasselquistii* Cuvier cited as synonyms. There was no type species until Jordan (1919) designated '*Salmo* [recte *Characinus*] *niloticus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1809' as the type. As mentioned above, the name *Salmo niloticus* was made available by Linnaeus (1758, p. 312), and this was therefore the type species of *Alestes* by Jordan's designation. Proposals (2) and (3) on BZN 51: 38 were amended on the voting paper in this respect. As also explained above, the valid specific name is that of *Cyprinus dentex* Linnaeus, 1758, and indeed Geoffroy (1809) gave this as being his *Characinus niloticus*. Thus *Myletes* and *Alestes* are formally only subjective synonyms even though based on the same taxon.

Müller & Troschel (1844) retained *Myletes* for a number of South American species. The usage of *Alestes* for African species and *Myletes* for South American taxa was followed by most authors and only a few recognised *Alestes* as a junior synonym of *Myletes*.

The four South American nominal species included in *Myletes* by Cuvier (1818) have since been placed elsewhere and the name *Myletes* has not been used for either African or South American taxa for 80 years. It was proposed that it be suppressed to conserve the much-used *Alestes* Müller & Troschel, 1844 (and the family name ALESTIDAE Hoedeman, 1951).

The specific name of *Myletes hasselquistii*, proposed by Cuvier (1818) as an unnecessary replacement for *dentex* as used by Hasselquist and Linnaeus, has not generally been used and it was proposed that it be placed on the Official Index.

Decision of the Commission

On 1 December 1994 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 51: 38, with the replacement of *Characinus niloticus* Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, 1809 by *Salmo niloticus* Linnaeus, 1758 in Proposals (2) and (3). At the close of the voting period on 1 March 1995 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes — 23: Bayer, Bock, Bouchet, Cocks, Corliss, Dupuis, Hahn, Halvorsen, Heppell, Holthuis, Kabata, Kraus, Macpherson, Martins de Souza, Minelli, Nielsen, Nye, Ride, Savage, Schuster, Štys, Thompson, Willink

Negative votes — 1: Lehtinen.

Mahnert abstained.

No votes were received from Cogger, Starobogatov, Trjapitzin and Uéno.

Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists and Official Indexes by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

Alestes Müller & Troschel, 1844, *Archiv für Naturgeschichte*, **10**(1): 88.

dentex, *Cyprinus*, Linnaeus, 1758, *Systema Naturae*, Ed. 10, vol. 1, p. 325.

hasselquistii, *Myletes*, Cuvier, 1818, *Mémoires du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle*, **4**: 449.

Myletes Cuvier, 1814, *Bulletin des Sciences, par la Société Philomatique de Paris*, **1814**: 75.

The following is the reference for the designation of *Salmo niloticus* Linnaeus, 1758 as the type species of the nominal genus *Alestes* Müller & Troschel, 1844:

Jordan, D.S. 1919. *The genera of fishes*; part 2, p. 221.

The following is the reference for the first reviser selection of the precedence of *Cyprinus dentex* over *Salmo niloticus*, both of Linnaeus (1758):

Valenciennes, A. 1849. In Cuvier, G. & Valenciennes, A., *Histoire naturelle des poissons*, vol. 22, p. 185.